

House Republican Press Release

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Reps. Stone, Tymniak Call for Special Session to Protect Property Rights



Says Legislature Should Not Delay on Important Issue of Eminent Domain

State Reps. Jack Stone, R-134th, and Cathy C. Tymniak, R-133rd, today called for a special legislative session this summer to limit the state's eminent domain laws that have been used to seize private property and turn it over to developers who then profit from economic development projects. They are co-sponsoring a proposed bill to protect property owners.

Rep. Stone said, "Private property rights are at the heart of the American political system. Government should be able to take people's homes, only in very limited cases. The Connecticut legislature needs to take action now to limit this power of government to take property for private developers."

Rep. Tymniak said, "The issue of eminent domain should be the top priority of the legislature and should be addressed in a special session. The ruling of the Supreme Court has jeopardized homeowners' rights in favor of big government and big developers. The American dream is to own a home not to have it confiscated by government.

Rep. Tymniak added, "As a legislature we need to act on this issue now and not wait until we are in regular session next February. We need to bring up the important issue of eminent domain and let it be our only focus and not let it get dragged into the regular workings of a session. Next year is our short session, and I fear eminent domain will be lost among other issues."

House Republican Leader Robert M. Ward of North Branford has spearheaded the drive to protect property owners' rights in the wake of a controversial U.S. Supreme Court decision involving the city of New London and residents of the Fort Trumbull area who challenged the use of eminent domain.

By a 5-4 margin, the high court ruled the state's eminent domain laws were constitutional but invited Connecticut to limit them if it wanted.

Rep. Ward's proposal deletes from existing state law six lines that currently permit development agencies to seize property for economic development. Local and state

governments could still exercise eminent domain to deal with truly blighted properties that pose health or safety hazards or for public works projects including schools, roads and other infrastructure improvements.